SECTION L
STRESS

HIGHER LEVEL

L

STRESS

KEY CONCEPTS

1. Stress can contribute to heart disease.
2. Everyone has stress.
3. There are healthy and unhealthy ways to cope with stress.

OBJECTIVES

1. Learners will state what stress is.
2. Learners will identify their sources of stress.
3. Learners will understand how stress affects them and what they can do to avoid the negative effects of stress.

MATERIALS

Handouts:

VOCABULARY

STRESSED OUT

SOME WAYS WE EXPERIENCE STRESS

TIPS ON COPING WITH STRESS

Activities:

ELASTIC BAND (INSTRUCTOR TO PROVIDE ELASTIC BAND)

MATCHING VOCABULARY

PHYSICAL SIGNS OF STRESS

EMOTIONAL/MENTAL SIGNS OF STRESS

COPING WITH STRESS

WHAT DO YOU DO TO COPE WITH STRESS?

RELAXATION BINGO

RELABELLING (OPTIONAL)

TIME MANAGEMENT" (OPTIONAL)

Overheads:

STRESSED OUT

COPING WITH STRESS

TIPS ON COPING WITH STRESS

SUGGESTED LESSON OUTLINE

1. Do warm-ups.
2. Review vocabulary definitions.
3. Review definition of stress with elastic band activity.
4. Do "Matching Vocabulary".
5. Discuss “Identifying Our Sources of Stress”.
6. Discuss “How Stress Affects Us”.
7. Do "Physical Signs of Stress" and "Emotional/Mental Signs of Stress".
8. Discuss “What We Can Do to Cope With Stress”.
9. Do relaxation exercises.
10. Do "Coping With Stress", "What Do You Do To Cope with Stress?" and “Relaxation Bingo”.
11. Do any of the optional activities.

1. Do Warm-ups

- Have students share with the person beside them one nice thing they have done for themselves or a success they have had this week.

2. Review vocabulary definitions.

3. Definition of stress

Ask: What is stress? Write their answers on the board/flipchart.

- Stress is our response to change.
- Stress involves three components:
  - The event.
  - The body and mind's response.
  - The way we think and feel about the event.
- Stress is normal. We need a certain amount to keep us stimulated and energized.

4. Do "Matching Vocabulary" Activity

5. Identifying our sources of stress

To help us cope with stress in our lives, it is important to know what things cause us stress.

Ask: What kinds of things cause you stress? List on board/flipchart.

Examples: no job, moving to Canada, learning a new language.

- **Explain:** There are different sources of stress. They come from outside of us (external), or from inside of us (internal). Some of these things are expected, unexpected, everyday hassles (troubles), or caused by our personalities and perceptions. Any change upsets our balance and causes stress.
  - **Expected events** — e.g. marriage, new baby, physical changes caused by aging.
  - **Unexpected events** — e.g. job loss, lottery win.
  - **Everyday hassles (troubles)** — e.g. missing bus, arguing with family member, worries about money. A build-up of these things may cause one to experience too much stress.
  - **Personality and perception** — Everyone responds to stress differently. What is stressful for one person may not be for another. For example, one person may not like to write tests while another does not mind. One person may feel anxious about coming to a new country while another may find it exciting.

6. How does stress affect us?

- Draw a diagram of a person on the board/flipchart or use the handout/overhead "Stressed Out".
- **Ask:** What do you feel when you have stress? (Write their answers on the diagram.)
  Explain: When you have stress, it affects your body and your mind. Your body needs more energy and oxygen when stressed. You breathe faster to take in more oxygen, and your heart pumps faster to move the oxygen to the parts of the body that need it the most, e.g. brain, large muscles. You may eat more to give you more energy. This is fine for a short time to help you cope with the stress. Over time too much stress can contribute to heart disease and high blood pressure.
- Handout: "Some Ways We Experience Stress".
- These are possible signs of too much stress (not an exhaustive list). You may have one or more of these.

Physical

- Heart beats fast.
- High blood pressure.
- Headaches.
- Change in appetite.
- Upset stomach.
- Dry mouth.
- Skin problems.
- Tight muscles.
- Less energy.
- More illnesses (e.g. colds, flu).
- Trouble breathing (e.g.shortness of breath).

Emotional/Mental

- Can't concentrate.
- Get upset easily.
- Change in amount of sleep.
- Forget things easily.
- Feel angry a lot.
- Cry a lot.
- Want to be alone a lot.
- Feel like you don't want to do anything.
- Increased argument.s

BUT

If you have any of these and they don't go away, see your doctor. They can be from stress but, they also can be from an illness.

7. Do "Physical Signs of Stress" and "Emotional/Mental Signs of Stress"

8. What can we do to cope with stress?

If we are starting to feel the signs of stress, there are things we can do to help us feel better.

- **Ask:** What kinds of things do you do when you feel stressed? (List their answers on the board/flipchart.)
- **Ask:** Which do you think are positive/healthy? What positive ways help you? Provide encouragement to do these things more often.
- Use overhead, "Coping With Stress".

A. Use positive ways to cope with stress

- Take care of yourself by eating in a healthy way, being physically active and getting enough rest.
- Take time for yourself by doing things that are relaxing and enjoyable.
- Build good relationships with people and talk to them about your problems.
- Learn new skills to help you cope e.g. time management.
- Think about the positive side of the situation.
- Think about what you can do to change the situation. Accept what you cannot change.

Instructor's Note: Accepting what cannot be changed may not always be appropriate, especially in situations where safety is threatened. In those cases, they may have to remove themselves from the situation.

B. Avoid negative ways of coping with stress e.g. drinking too much alcohol, or criticizing yourself and/or others.

9. Relaxation Exercises

Short relaxation breaks help stop the cycle of stress and restore energy.

Examples:

Deep Breathing
Have students sit with feet flat on the floor and arms resting comfortably. Have them close their eyes if they wish. Tell them:

- Breathe in deeply as if the air is coming up through your feet. Feel your chest fill up with air.
- Hold your breath. Feel your muscles tense. Hold it for 15-30 seconds.
- Now breathe out and feel your body relax. Feel the tension flowing out of your hands and feet. Let it flow out. Relax.

Have group do 3-5 deep breaths.

Visualization
Have students sit in a comfortable position. Have them close their eyes. Tell them:

- Think of a place where you love to be — a place where you feel at peace, where you feel free, where you can relax.
- See it in your mind. Imagine yourself there. What do you see, feel and hear? Stay there for a minute, then have a stretch and return to your work.

Give students 60 seconds to visualize.

10. Activities:
- Coping With Stress
- What Do You Do To Cope With Stress?
- Relaxation Bingo

11. Optional Activities:
- Relabelling
- Time Management

Do the following with the group — depending on time available. (See PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, Suggested Activities section for instruction sheets.)
- My Body Lies Over the Sofa
- Blizzard
- Kokomo

Physical activity can help break up a daily routine and give more energy for the day.

For additional background information, see **Additional Resources** section.

Vocabulary

avoid (v.) - to keep away from

cope (n.) - to handle, manage a problem or situation

criticize (v.) - to find fault with, to tell someone what they are doing wrong

hassles/troubles (n.) - things that bother us

heart disease (n.) - problem affecting the heart

high blood pressure (n.) - two or more blood pressure readings of 140/90 or higher

improve (v.) - to make or become better

negative (adj.) - unhealthy, not good for us

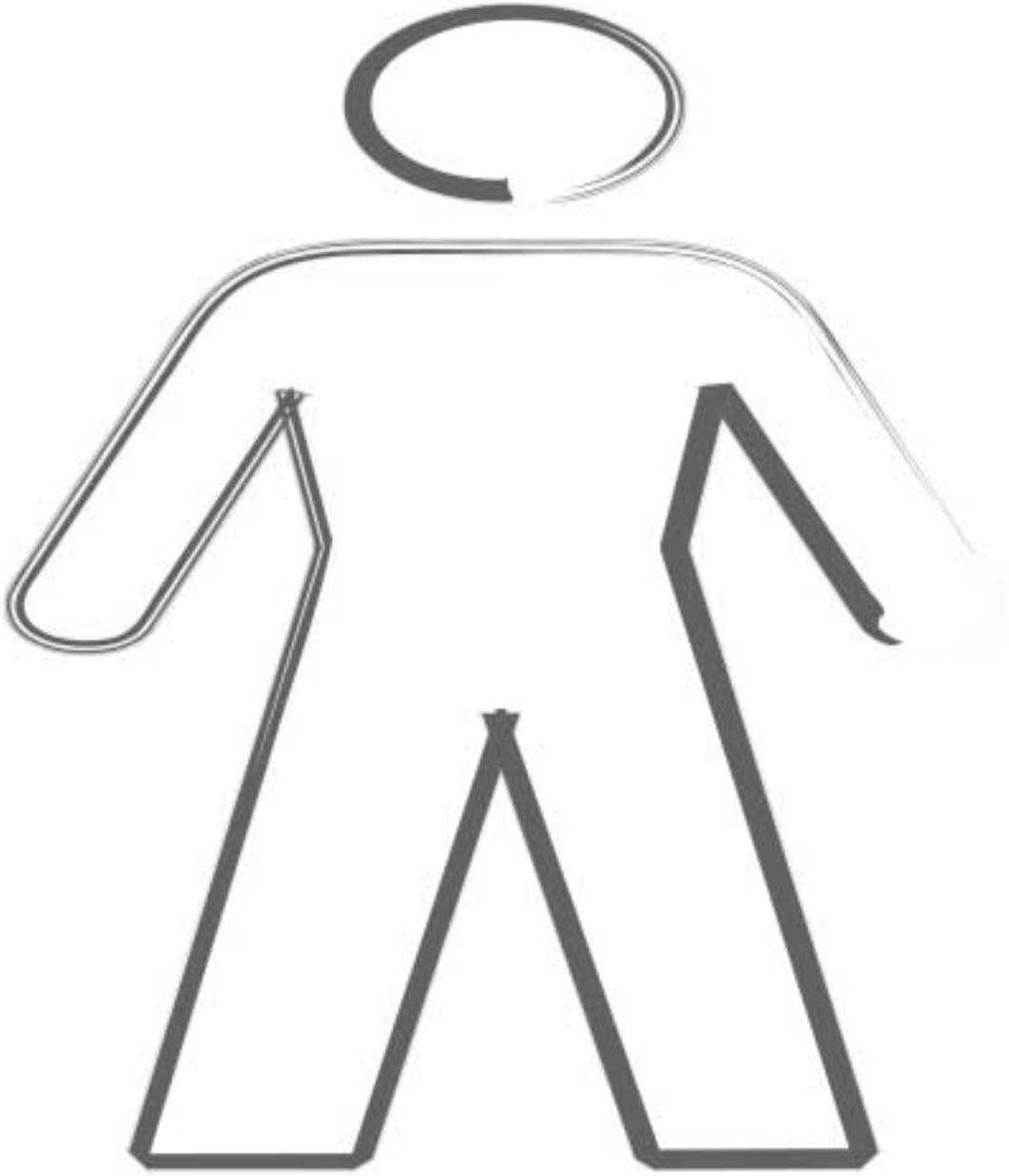
positive (adj.) - healthy, good for us

situation (n.) - what we are facing right now, where we find ourselves, the problem

stress (n.) - our response to change
- includes an event, a response, and thoughts and feelings

support (n. or v.) - help

Stressed Out!



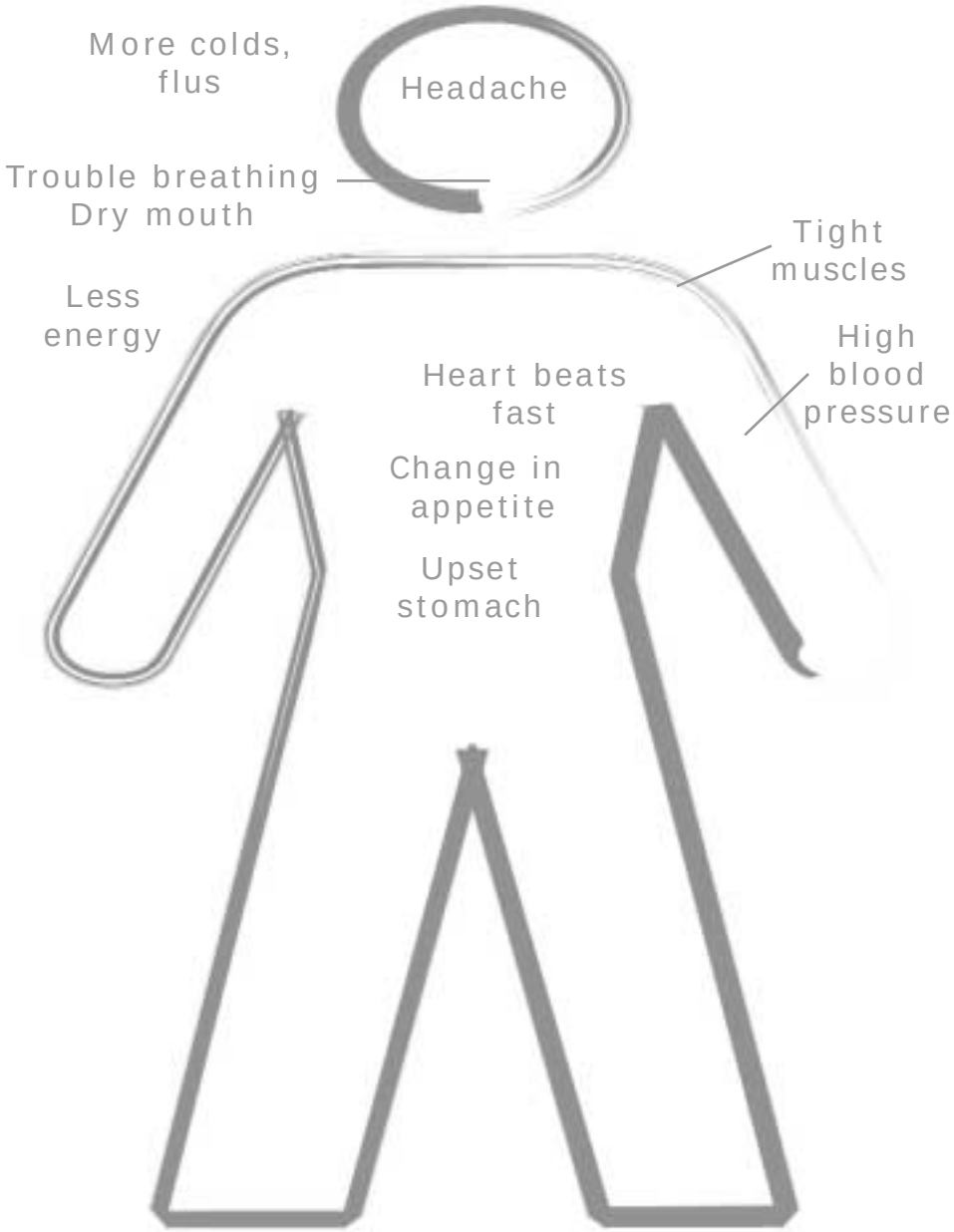
Some Ways We Experience Stress

Physical

- Headache.
- Change in appetite.
- Trouble breathing.
- Dry mouth.
- Tight muscles.
- Less energy.
- Heart beats fast.
- High blood pressure.
- Upset stomach.
- More colds, flus.

Emotional/Mental

- Can't concentrate.
- Get upset easily.
- Change in amount of sleep.
- Forget things easily.
- Feel angry a lot.
- Cry a lot.
- Want to be alone a lot.
- Feel like you don't want to do anything.



Tips On Coping With Stress

Use positive ways to cope with stress

- Take care of yourself.
- Take time for yourself.
- Build good relationships.
- Learn new skills to help you cope.
- Think about what you can do to change the situation.
- Think about the positive side of the situation.
- **Avoid negative ways of coping with stress.**

ELASTIC BAND

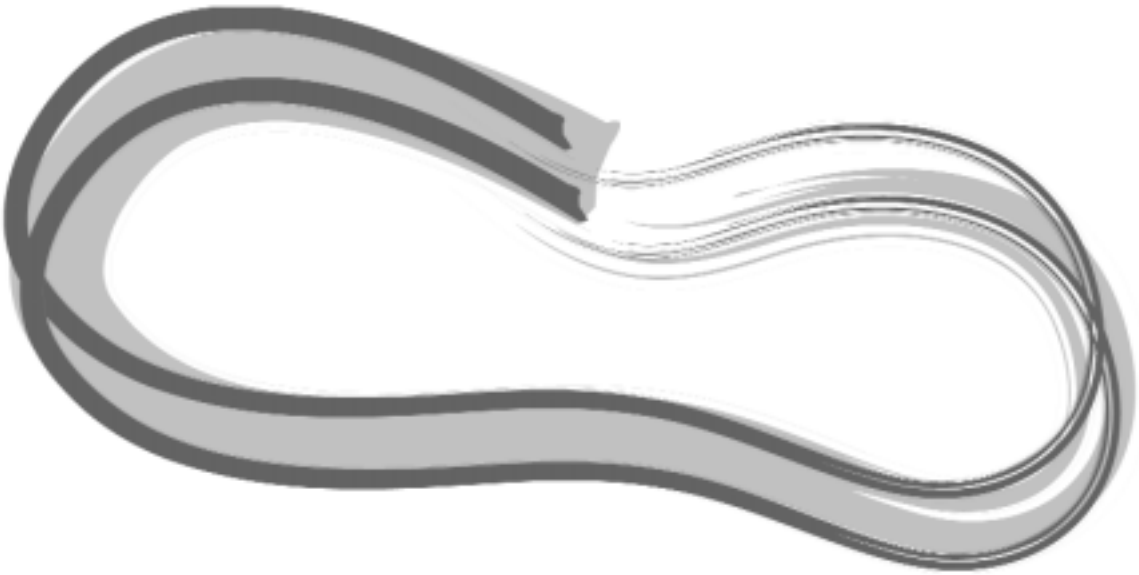
Give each student an elastic

Demonstrate that if you do not put any tension *(stress)* on it at all, it is not useful.

Stretch it slightly and twang it. *(the right amount of stress to make it useful)*

Stretch too far and it snaps. *(too much stress)*

This is like the string on a violin or guitar. We need enough stress to make music, but not so much that the string snaps.



A MATCHING VOCABULARY

Match the words in List A with their meaning in List B.
Place the number beside the correct word(s).

A	B
_____ **Avoid**	1 Includes an event, a response and thoughts and feelings.
_____ **Hassles**	2 Handle, manage.
_____ **Negative**	3 To keep away from.
_____ **Improve**	4 Good, healthy.
_____ **Cope**	5 Unhealthy.
_____ **Positive**	6 Make better.
_____ **Stress**	7 Things that bother us.

A MATCHING VOCABULARY ANSWER SHEET

Match the words in List A with their meaning in List B.
Place the number beside the correct word(s).

A	B
3 **Avoid**	1 Includes an event, a response and thoughts and feelings.
7 **Hassles**	2 Handle, manage.
5 **Negative**	3 To keep away from.
6 **Improve**	4 Good, healthy.
2 **Cope**	5 Unhealthy.
4 **Positive**	6 Make better.
1 **Stress**	7 Things that bother us.

PHYSICAL SIGNS OF STRESS

Match the letters on the figure with the physical signs of stress listed in the left column.

Physical

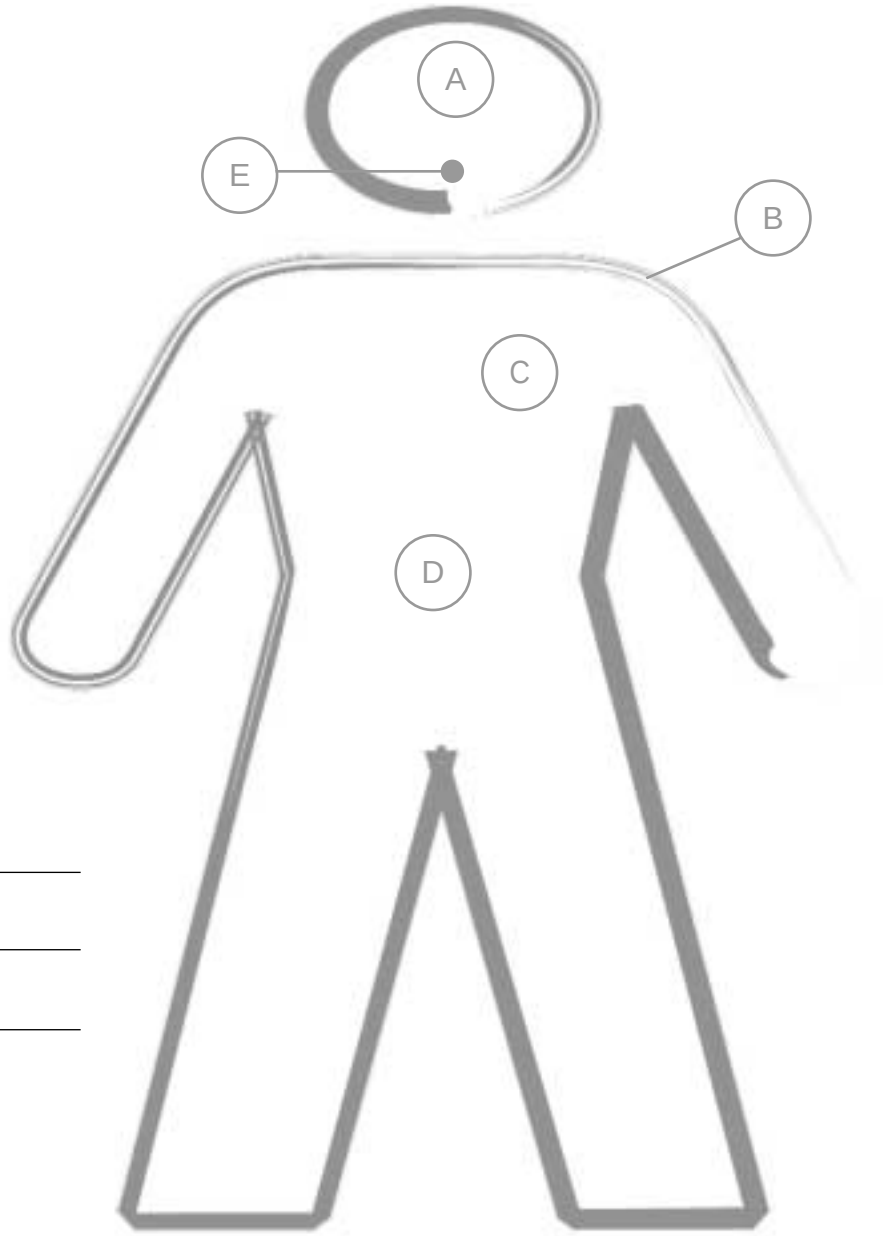
_____ **Headaches.**

_____ **Tight muscles.**

_____ **Dry mouth.**

_____ **Heart beats fast.**

_____ **Upset stomach.**



List 3 other physical signs of stress:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

A

PHYSICAL SIGNS OF STRESS ANSWER SHEET

Match the letters on the figure with the physical signs of stress listed in the left column.

Physical

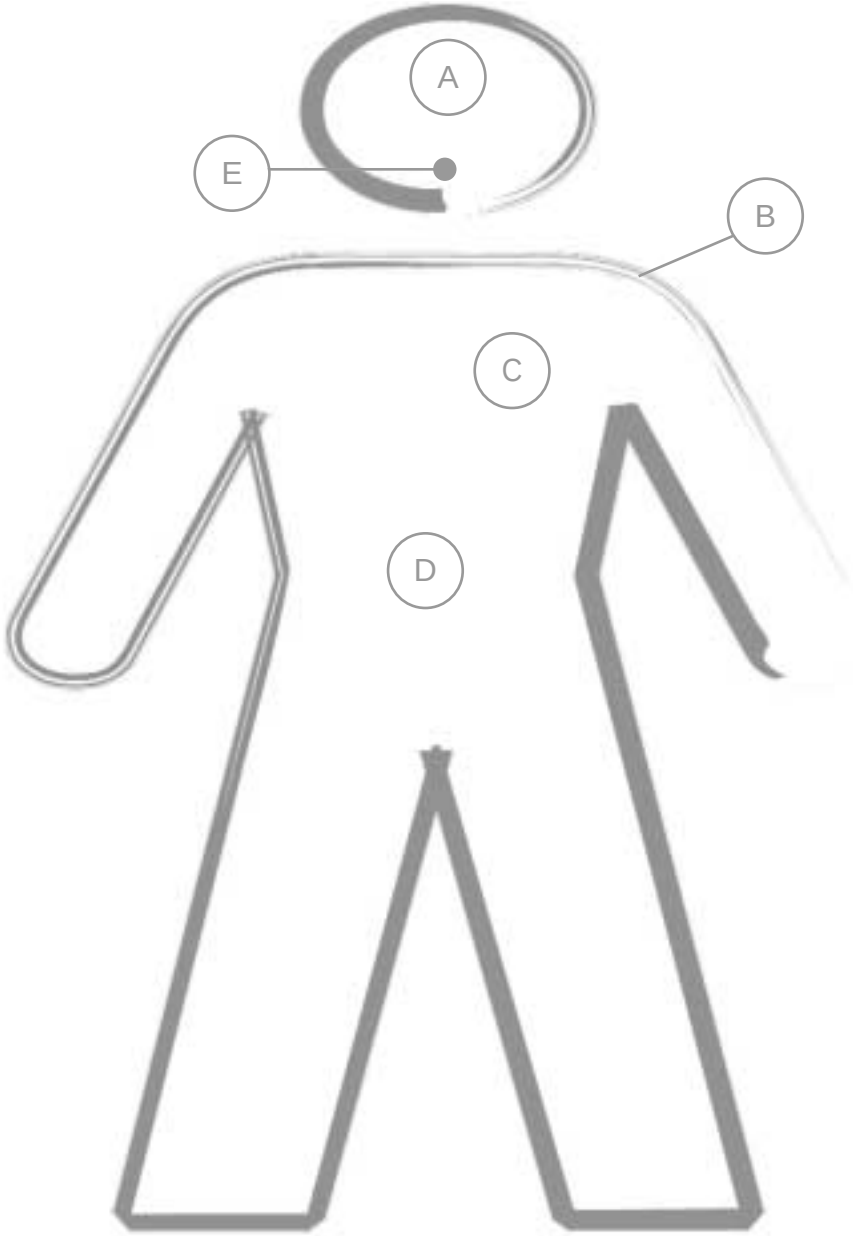
A **Headaches.**

B **Tight muscles.**

E **Dry mouth.**

C **Heart beats fast.**

D **Upset stomach.**



Other possible signs:

- change in appetite.
- high blood pressure.
- skin problems.
- trouble breathing.
- less energy.
- more colds, flus.

A EMOTIONAL/MENTAL SIGNS OF STRESS

Fill in the blanks with one of the following words:

ANGRY / CONCENTRATE / UPSET / DO ANYTHING / ARGUMENTS / SLEEPING / FORGET / ALONE / CRY

1. Can't _____ .
2. Get _____ easily.
3. Changes in _____ .
4. _____ things easily.
5. Feel _____ a lot.
6. _____ a lot.
7. Want to be _____ a lot.
8. Feel like you don't want to _____ .
9. More _____ .

A

EMOTIONAL/MENTAL SIGNS OF STRESS ANSWER SHEET

Fill in the blanks with one of the following words:

ANGRY / CONCENTRATE / UPSET / DO ANYTHING / ARGUMENTS / SLEEPING / FORGET / ALONE / CRY

1. Can't __CONCENTRATE__ .
2. Get __ANGRY__ easily.
3. Changes in __SLEEPING__ .
4. __FORGET__ things easily.
5. Feel __UPSET__ a lot.
6. __CRY__ a lot.
7. Want to be __ALONE__ a lot.
8. Feel like you don't want to __DO ANYTHING__ .
9. More __ARGUMENTS__ .

A COPING WITH STRESS

Here are some things people do to cope with stress. Mark ☺ for positive or healthy and ☹ for negative or unhealthy.

_____ smoke cigarettes

_____ drink alcohol

_____ talk to a friend

_____ go for a walk

_____ yell, scream

_____ criticize yourself or others

_____ take pills

_____ see a movie

_____ make a list of things you can do to solve the problem

_____ rest

_____ do breathing exercises

_____ listen to music

_____ pray

_____ meditate

_____ clean the house

_____ think about what is positive

_____ take a warm bath/shower

_____ learn a new skill (e.g. computer)

What do you do to cope with stress?

_____

_____

_____

COPING WITH STRESS
ANSWER SHEET

Here are some things people do to cope with stress. Mark ☺ for positive or healthy and ☹ for negative or unhealthy.

☹ _____ smoke cigarettes

☹ _____ drink alcohol

☺ _____ talk to a friend

☺ _____ go for a walk

☹ _____ yell, scream

☹ _____ criticize yourself or others

☹ _____ take pills

☺ _____ see a movie

☺ _____ make a list of things you can do to solve the problem

☺ _____ rest

☺ _____ do breathing exercises

☺ _____ listen to music

☺ _____ pray

☺ _____ meditate

☺ _____ clean the house

☺ _____ think about what is positive

☺ _____ take a warm bath/shower

☺ _____ learn a new skill (e.g. computer)

What do you do to cope with stress?

_____

_____

_____

"WHAT DO YOU DO TO COPE WITH STRESS?"

Ask your classmates:
"What do you do to cope with stress?"

Name	What I do to cope with stress...

Write down some of the things you would like to try:

_____

_____

_____

_____

RELAXATION BINGO

Find people who do the following things to relax.
Write their name in the box.

writes in a book	reads good books	draws pictures
goes for walks	takes deep breaths	listens to music
likes long baths	I like to relax by	goes to movies
eats meals slowly	likes to exercise	plants flowers
plays with children	does yoga	goes out with friends

RELABELLING

OBJECTIVE: Learners will attempt to change their perspective by looking at the positive side of things.

1. Divide participants into groups of 2 — one person is A and one person is B.
2. A & B partner up.
3. A has 45 seconds to tell B all the everyday things that really bother him/her. B just listens.
4. Then B tells A.
5. Now A tells B all the reasons he/she feels lucky (45 seconds). B just listens.
6. Then B tells A.

Discuss with the group how they felt in the first part (i.e. talk about the things that bother them) and how they felt in the second part (i.e. talk about the reasons they feel lucky).

Explain that some of the things they mentioned may both stress them and make them feel lucky.

This is a way of coping with stress — i.e. looking for the positive in a frustrating situation may change our perspective on how we look at things.

TIME MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES: Learners will see how they spend their time during a typical day.
Learners will discuss the difficulties of fitting important things into their schedules.

MATERIALS: Clock handout.

METHOD:

1. Ask group to list things that are important to them. (e.g. family, job).

2. On the Clock Chart, have them list all the things they have to do in a day and have them mark the amount of time those activities would take on the clock.

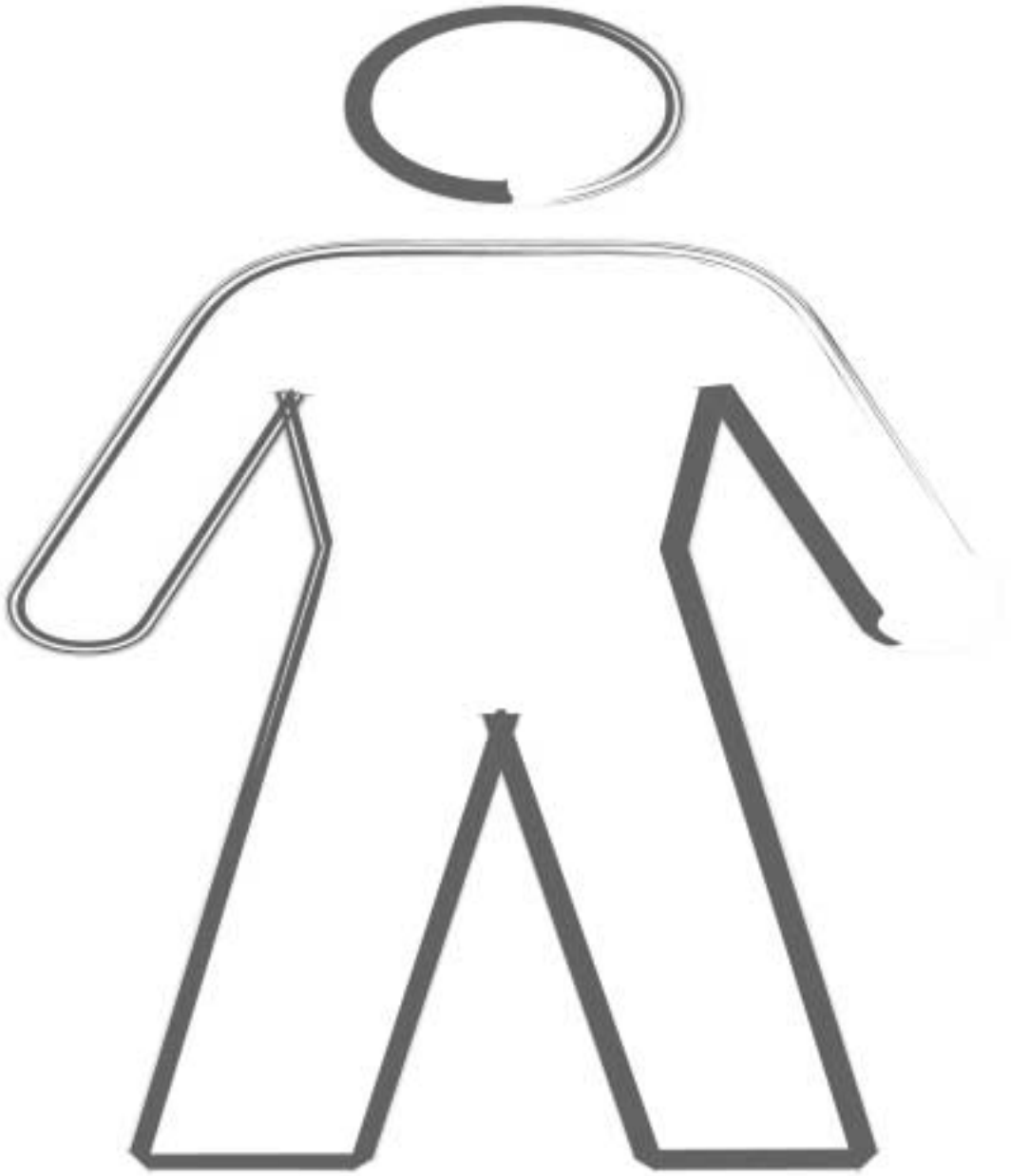
3. Now, have them compare this list with the list of important things. Do they match? Discuss the reasons why they aren't able to do everything they would like to do or fit the important things into their lives?
   - Putting things off.
   - Trouble saying no.
   - Trouble asking for help.
   - Not planning enough time to do things.
   - Trying to do too much at once.

4. Discuss solutions.

TIME MANAGEMENT CLOCK

Time Management				
WORK	SHOPPING	COOKING	CLEANING	RELAXING
EXERCISE	FRIENDS	SLEEPING	EATING	OTHER

STRESSED OUT!



COPING WITH STRESS

POSITIVE Ways Of Coping

- Are healthy.
- Can help for a long time.

NEGATIVE Ways Of Coping

- Are unhealthy.
- May only help for a short time.

At different times, a single way may be either POSITIVE or NEGATIVE.

TIPS ON COPING WITH STRESS

<u>USE POSITIVE</u> ways to cope with stress

- Take care of yourself.
- Take time for yourself.
- Build good relationships.
- Learn new skills to help you cope.
- Think about what you can do to change the situation.
- Think about the postive side of the situation.

<u>AVOID NEGATIVE</u> ways of coping with stress.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

COMMUNITY RESOURCES
(see next page)

"COPING WITH STRESS"
Heart and Stroke Foundation

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

TORONTO PUBLIC HEALTH, TORONTO HEALTH CONNECTION
(416) 338-7600
Website: www.toronto.ca/health

CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION
Tel: (416) 789-7957
Website: www.cmha.ca

- information, workshops on stress

CENTRE FOR ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH
Te: 1-800-463-6273 (Information line)
Website: www.camh.net

- information on mental health

HEART AND STROKE FOUNDATION
Tel.: 1-888-473-4636
Website: ww1.heartandstroke.ca

- pamphlets on coping with stress